

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method of scoring risk associated with cashing a check, the method comprising:

receiving information about a check written by a first party and presented to an entity for cashing by ~~an entity~~ a second party other than the first party check writing entity;

accessing stored positive pay information about issued checks wherein said positive pay information indicates whether a check issuer is willing to honor the presented check so as to reimburse an entity who has provided cash in return for accepting the check; and

assessing the reliability of the positive pay information; and

determining a risk score associated with cashing the presented check based at least in part on the positive pay information and the assessed reliability of the positive pay information.

2. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein receiving information about the presented check comprises receiving at least one of the set consisting of: bank number, account number, check number, check issue date, check amount, payee identifier, and payor identifier.

3. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein receiving information about the presented check comprises receiving information obtained from a magnetic ink character recognition (MICR) line on the check.

4. (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising determining a graduated positive pay risk score based at least in part on the stored positive pay information, wherein the positive pay risk score corresponds to a graduated level of confidence that the check will be honored by the check issuer.

5. (Original) The method of Claim 4, wherein determining a risk score associated with cashing the presented check comprises determining a transaction risk score that is based at least in part on the positive pay risk score.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 5, wherein determining the transaction risk score is further based at least in part on additional information associated with cashing the presented check.

7. (Original) The method of Claim 6, wherein determining the transaction risk score based at least in part on additional information comprises determining the transaction risk score based at least in part on at least one of the set consisting of: additional information about the check, information about a check presenter associated with the check, and information about an entity to which the check is presented for cashing.

8. (Currently Amended) A computerized method for determining whether to authorize payment of a second-party check presented to an entity for processing, the method comprising:

obtaining with a point of sale device installed in an entity location data comprising at least one of: an account identifier, a check number, a check issue date, and an amount associated with a second-party check presented for processing;

transmitting the data to a check authorization system;

identifying at the check authorization system which of a plurality of positive pay databases is associated with the second-party check;

accessing the identified positive pay database associated with the second-party check and comparing the transmitted data and information stored in the positive pay database;

assessing the reliability of the information provided by the positive pay database;

determining a risk score associated with accepting the second-party check from a possessor of the check and providing valuable consideration to the possessor in return for the second-party check based at least in part on the comparison and further based upon the assessed reliability of the information provided by the positive pay database;

determining based at least in part on the risk score whether to authorize payment of the second-party check; and

transmitting a recommendation indicative of the authorization determination to the entity.

9. (Original) The computerized method of Claim 8, further comprising:

obtaining with the point of sale device information about a payee of the second-party check; and

transmitting the payee information to the check authorization system.

10. (Original) The computerized method of Claim 8, wherein determining whether to authorize payment of the second-party check comprises determining whether to guarantee the second-party check.

11. (Original) The computerized method of Claim 8, wherein determining whether to authorize payment of the second-party check further comprises determining whether to purchase the second-party check from the entity.

12. **(Currently Amended)** A computerized system that determines whether to recommend the payment of a second-party check presented to an entity for processing, the system comprising:

a point of sale device installed at an entity location, wherein the point of sale device is configured to receive data comprising at least one of: an account identifier, a check number, a check issue date, and a amount associated with a second-party check presented for exchange of the check for valuable consideration, the point of sale device further configured to transfer the data to a check authorization system;

a computer-accessible storage medium comprising information that associates a plurality of records in a positive pay database with various issued checks; and

a computer processor configured to determine a risk score based at least in part on whether the data associated with the second-party check and received by the point of sale device match a record in the positive pay database and based upon the assessed reliability of the positive pay information, the computer processor further configured to determine based at least in part on the risk score whether to recommend to the entity payment of valuable consideration to a possessor of the second-party check ~~for the second-party check~~.

13. **(Currently Amended)** An apparatus that scores risk associated with accepting a check, the apparatus comprising:

a database that stores positive pay information about checks issued by check writers to payees wherein said positive pay information indicates issued checks that check writers are willing to honor;

a computer processor configured to receive input about a check presented to an entity by check presenter claiming to be a payee, the computer processor further

configured to use the input to access positive pay information from the database that is associated with the payor of the check and assess the reliability of the positive pay information, the computer processor further configured to determine a risk score associated with accepting the check and providing cash to the payee in return for accepting the check based at least in part on the positive pay information and the assessed reliability thereof.

14. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein the database further stores information about issued checks that check writers are not willing to honor.

15. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein the computer processor is located at a check authorization system and the database is located at a financial entity external to the check authorization system.

16. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein the computer processor is located at a check authorization system and the database is located at the check authorization system.

17. **(Currently Amended)** An apparatus that scores risk associated with a financial transaction, the apparatus comprising:

a computer processor configured to receive information about a financial transaction associated with an obligation to assess the reliability of the information the financial transaction comprising payment of cash for a check presented by a possessor of the check, the check being written by a payor other than the possessor, the computer processor further configured to determine a risk score associated with the financial transaction that is based at least in part on stored information and the assessed reliability thereof obtained from the payor associated with the obligation.

18. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 17, wherein the obligation comprises at least one of the set consisting of: a personal check, corporate check, company insurance refund check, tax refund check, Social Security check, payroll check, other government-issued check, a traveler's check, bank check, official check, convenience check, money order, second-party check, third-party check, value-carrying paper, and other type of cashable financial instrument.

19. **(Currently Amended)** A method that scores risk associated with a financial transaction, the method comprising:

receiving information about a financial transaction associated with a second-party obligation wherein a possessor of a check written by a payor other than the possessor is seeking to cash the check; and

assessing the reliability of the information; and

determining a risk score associated with the financial transaction based at least in part on stored information obtained from the payor associated with the second-party obligation and the assessed reliability thereof.

20. **(Currently Amended)** A computerized device that indicates to an entity whether to accept a second-party check, the device comprising:

a computer processor configured to receive information, including positive pay information, about a financial transaction associated with presentment of a second-party check to an entity by a possessor of the check other than the second-party for consideration from the entity and assess the reliability of the received positive pay information, the computer processor further configured to determine a risk score associated with the financial transaction based at least in part on positive pay information about the second-party check and the assessed reliability of the positive pay information, the computer processor further configured to indicate to the entity whether to accept the second-party check based at least in part on the risk score.

21. **(Original)** The computerized device of Claim 20, wherein the computer processor is further configured to determine whether to guarantee the second-party check based at least in part on the positive pay information.

22. **(Original)** The computerized device of Claim 20, wherein the computer processor is further configured to determine whether to purchase the second-party check based at least in part on the positive pay information.

23. **(Currently Amended)** A computerized method that indicates to an entity whether to accept a second-party check, the method comprising:

receiving information about a financial transaction associated with a presentment of a second-party check to an entity by a possessor of the check other than the second-party for consideration from the entity said information including positive pay information;

assessing the reliability of the positive pay information;

determining a risk score associated with the financial transaction based at least in part on positive pay information about the second-party check and the assessed reliability of the positive pay information; and

indicating to the entity whether to accept the second-party check based at least in part on the risk score.

24. (Original) The method of Claim 23, further comprising determining whether to guarantee the second-party check based at least in part on the risk score.

25. (Original) The method of Claim 23, further comprising determining whether to purchase the second-party check based at least in part on the risk score.

26. (Currently Amended) A system for scoring risk associated with processing a check, the system comprising:

means for receiving information about a second party check presented to a check cashing entity by a possessor of the check other than the second party for cashing;

means for accessing stored positive pay information about issued checks wherein said positive pay information indicates whether a check issuer is willing to honor the presented check; and

means for assessing the reliability of the positive pay information; and

means for determining a risk score associated with processing the presented check based at least in part on the positive pay information and the assessed reliability thereof.